

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES – prepared by Ilene Hyams, ADA Office  
May 25, 2011

The CODI Meeting was called to order by Mr. Martinez, at 1:47 pm.

Attendance: District 1 Commissioner Jordan: John Miller; Present  
District 2 Commissioner Monestine: Vacant CODI Seat  
District 3 Commissioner Edmonson: Jose Granda; Present  
District 4 Commissioner Heyman: Sandra Hix; Excused Absence  
District 5 Commissioner Barreiro: Jose “Ernie Martinez (Chair); Present  
District 6 Commissioner Sosa: Pedro Rodriguez; Present  
District 7 Vacant Commission Seat: Jackson David; Present  
District 8 Commissioner Bell: Paul Edwards; Present  
District 9 Commissioner Moss: Ron Fulton; Present  
District 10 Commissioner Souto: Dr. Sam Kohlenberg; Present  
District 11 Commissioner Martinez: Denise Valkema; Present  
District 12 Commissioner Diaz: Vacant CODI Seat  
District 13 Vacant Commission Seat: Vacant CODI Seat

Announcements: Epilepsy Foundation announced a campaign on Face Book to win \$500,000 – they ask anyone who uses Face Book to go on line and vote for the Epilepsy Foundation. Money won will be used to provide services for children and adults with epilepsy. It was announced that the Center for Independent Living (CIL) will be having their Disability Advocacy Council meeting on June 17, 2011 from 10:00-12:00 at the CIL. They will be discussing the ADA and Emergency Management. It was announced that SCLAD Resource Center at 221 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is now open and is ready to provide services to people with disabilities. They will serve the whole community. SCLAD is not an acronym; their mission is to facilitate independent living, economic self-sufficiency and full community integration for people with disabilities by providing and coordinating support services; and, by generating employment and vocational opportunities and affordable barrier free housing.

Approval of the Agenda: **Paul Edwards made a motion which was seconded by Pedro Rodriguez to accept the agenda if Section III starting with Reports and going through consideration be stricken from the agenda and a request that future agendas be simplified and made easier for people who use screen readers to read. Motion Passed.**

Approval of the minutes of April 27, 2011: **Denise Valkema made a motion which was seconded by Paul Edwards to accept the minutes.** There was discussion concerning alternate minutes that had been prepared by the Chair. It was said that some CODI members were confused because there were multiple minutes being sent by email. CODI members were reminded that they may make corrections to the minutes before the meeting or during the time that minutes are discussed. **The Motion passed with the Chairman opposed to the motion. Pedro Rodriguez made a motion which was seconded by John Miller to have the ADA Office indicate in the minutes if a member’s absence was excused or unexcused. Motion passed.** Members must notify the ADA Office or the Chairman if they will not be attending a board meeting.

REPORTS: Chairman reported that he worked on the development of the May agenda, the April minutes, and he attended the Transportation Committee meeting. He also worked on goals for CODI, reviewed both para-transit issues and emergency management issues for the May meeting. He also worked with Mr. Miller on a letter to be sent to the County Commissioners about the Para-transit Radio Frequency Identification Pilot Program (RFID) however, he still has some minor revisions before the letter goes out.

Access: Mr. David reported that the committee met on May 12<sup>th</sup> they discussed “no dog signs” in County parks. There was some discussion about the sign’s color and the use of an international disability symbol on the sign. The committee had a question concerning emergency management; it was suggested that they ask that question when the Emergency Management department staff addresses CODI later in the meeting. It was

also said that there was a counter at a governmental office which was the right height for someone using a wheelchair but the counter has usually been closed. There will be an Outreach/Education committee meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am -12:00 at CIL.

Transportation: Ms. Valkema reported that there was a Transportation Committee meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>. **Paul Edwards made a motion which was seconded by Pedro Rodriguez to rectify an error by affirming that Denise Valkema had permission to send a letter to Advance Transportation Solutions. The Motion passed with the Chairman opposed to the motion. Jackson David made a motion which was seconded by Paul Edwards to have all letters that had been approved by the board to come back to the board for approval before being sent out. Motion passed. Denise Valkema made a motion which was seconded by John Miller to have the Chairman write a letter to the County Commission asking what effect, if any, the loss of the 186 million dollars in Federal funds will have on Para-Transit over the next six months. Motion passed unanimously. Denise Valkema made a motion which was seconded by Paul Edwards that a letter be written by the Chairman to the County Commission and the County Administration respectfully requesting the County give consideration to stabilize the para-transit program by the retention of present senior para-transit staff. Motion passed.** Next Transportation Committee meeting will be June 6 from 2:00-4:00 at the ADA Office.

Housing Committee: Mr. Fulton had scheduled a meeting but no one came. Mr. Rodriguez offer his office at SCLAD the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June if the committee wants to meet then. Ron Fulton and Pedro Rodriguez will contact the ADA Office to set up a phone call so the Co-Chairs may speak.

Membership Committee: No meeting this month. An update was provided on the two CODI approved candidates.

New Business: Chairman introduced the subject of emergency management and spoke of the need to start fresh and that CODI should bridge the gap between government and the community.

Mr. Sommerhoff, Miami-Dade Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, made a presentation. His full presentation is attached to these minutes. There were two questions asked of him which are below.

These are questions that where asked of Mr. Sommerhoff:

Mr. Rodriguez asked if the County's plan is ADA compliant; if not in what areas isn't it and what the time frames to make it compliant are. Mr. Sommerhoff answered it in his presentation by saying:

Miami-Dade and all counties in Florida are required to submit a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to the State of Florida in accordance with Florida Statute 252. Miami-Dade's emergency plans have always been in compliance with requirements set by the State of Florida. It was in July of 2007 that the Department of Justice put out its "ADA Checklist for Emergency Shelters" to be followed by a FEMA "Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters" document released to government agencies last year in November. Now armed with these guidance documents Miami-Dade DEM has been working to further improve its Mass Care program to effectively meet the needs of the disability community.

Mr. Edwards asked about the physical accessibility of the locations that will house people in an emergency (centers/shelters) and what guidelines or checklist are utilized for the assessment. Mr. Sommerhoff stated that the list of the Red Cross centers are on their website and every year the list changes because they only use the newest schools or older schools that have been renovated because the State now calls for an enhanced hurricane protection area when new schools are built or old schools are renovated. Each year the Mass Care Coordinator and Miami-Dade Public School staff assesses the sites by using the DOJ Checklist. That isn't the only assessment tool, they also use the criteria used by the Red Cross which has been adopted by the State of Florida which include items like the required space per person and type of kitchen facilities needed. He also stated that only high schools and middle schools are used and not elementary schools because of the size of the bathroom fixtures.

The Chairman called on Mr. Dubin to speak; his executive summary is attached to these minutes. He is the Director of Advocacy at CIL and worked for 12 years at the DOJ. He indicated that there have been some improvements like TTY's and accessible beds; but he would like a dialogue with the County because he has many concerns and he would like the County to respond to his executive summary. He also said that the 311 system got some questions wrong when he tested the system. He also said that on a call to 311 it was said

that only one person could accompany a person going to a special needs center. He asked what would happen to a person who is blind and needs to get to an evacuation center if the person didn't have anyone to drive her, didn't use STS, and could not use fixed route because she couldn't find the bus. He said that the Red Cross website was void of any information on services. He said that if the County chooses not to work with him he urges CODI to ask for answers to his questions.

The Chairman again mentioned the need for CODI to be involved in emergency management issues. The Chairman spoke about the Special Needs Advisory Panel (SNAP). Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Miller suggested that the members on CODI who also attend the SNAP meetings should periodically update CODI on SNAP's activity. Mr. Edwards asked Mr. Sommerhoff about components in Miami-Dade County where there is still work to be done and how CODI could help. Mr. Sommerhoff said that they have concerns with issues that are not part of DOJ guidance which bring up operational or liability concerns for the County. He spoke about Broward County. The DOJ has request through a settlement agreement that Broward County go into peoples' homes to help them pack and each evacuation center to have a full pharmacy and dispense medication to people in the evacuation centers. So far Broward has indicated that they will not do either of those things. Broward sited liability, logistic and cost concerns as to why they will not agree to do this. In addition they believe that unlicensed people cannot give out medication and things that look sensible becomes impossible to execute like going into homes and helping people pack or fully stocking a pharmacy at each evacuation center with volunteers giving out medication. Mr. Edwards asked Mr. Sommerhoff to address the last part of his question which was what degree does he see CODI helping with issues which are uncertain or lack clarity. Mr. Sommerhoff said CODI could be a vehicle for getting information out to people with disabilities; to understand what resources are available like the ALERT program and to encourage people to make preparation in case there is an emergency. It was suggested by Mr. Edwards that the minutes have attached the two presentations. In a response to a question by Mr. Fulton, Mr. Sommerhoff said that FEMA had given Miami-Dade County money to do a pilot program (CORE) which if successful could serve as a model program across the Country. The project involves contacting forty five faith base and 45 non-profit organizations to see what they can provide following an emergency. The project was successful with 6,000 more spaces found for people if needed, the ability to provide 3,000 more meal for the community, and the identification of thousands more of volunteers to help before-during-after an emergency. He said everyone must be involved in providing services and that government can't do it alone.

Mr. Dubin urged CODI to follow up on his questions he posed in his executive summary.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

To obtain this information in accessible format, please call 305-375-2012 or email [ihyams@miamidade.gov](mailto:ihyams@miamidade.gov)